

912.39939X00

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

Applicant(s): R. BRADBURY, et al

Serial No.: (not yet assigned)

Filed: April 5, 2001

For: CONTAINER UNLOADING APPARATUS

International
Application No.: PCT/GB99/03285

International
Filing Date: October 5, 1999

PRELIMINARY AMENDMENT

Commissioner for Patents
Washington, D.C. 20231

April 5, 2001

Sir:

The following preliminary amendments and remarks are respectfully submitted in connection with the above-identified application.

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please amend claims 4-6, 8-11, 16, 17, 23, 25 and 27-29 as follows:

4. (amended) Apparatus as claimed in claim 1, wherein the receiving and unloading positions are substantially at the same level.

5. (amended) Apparatus as claimed in claim 1, wherein the rotating means is effective to rotate the carrier so that a container is rotated between said first and second orientations.

6. (amended) Apparatus as claimed in claim 1, wherein the translating means and rotating means are each reversible.

8. (amended) Apparatus as claimed in claim 1, wherein the carrier comprises a carriage slidable between said receiving and unloading positions and a rotatable carrier mounted on the carriage.

9. (amended) Apparatus as claimed in claim 1, wherein the position at which the translating means locates the carrier at the unloading position is determined by reference to a dimension of the container or its contents.

10. (amended) Apparatus as claimed in claim 1, wherein the translating means and rotating means are arranged such that initial movement of the container away from the receiving position includes both translational and rotational components.

11. (amended) Apparatus as claimed in claim 1, wherein at least one of the translating means and the rotating means includes means for moving the carrier to a preferred position following a stoppage.

16. (amended) Apparatus as claimed in claim 13 or claim 14, including means for controlling articles in the path such that articles already unloaded in the path may be maintained at a level which is substantially the same as that of the conveying means.

17. (amended) Apparatus as claimed in claim 13 or claim 14, wherein the conveying means comprises endless band conveyor means.

23. (amended) Apparatus as claimed in claim 19 or claim 20, wherein said first speed is variable and said second speed is fixed.

25. (amended) Apparatus as claimed in claim 19 or claim 20, including further detector means for stopping the conveying means substantially when the contents of the container have been unloaded.

27. (amended) Apparatus as claimed in claim 19 or claim 20, including a variable capacity reservoir for receiving articles from the conveying means, including at least one sensor for detecting the relative capacity of the reservoir, and further including means for controlling the conveying means in accordance with signals derived from the sensor.

28. (amended) Apparatus as claimed in claim 13, wherein the conveying means is driven at a first relatively high speed during a first phase during which a first, major part of the contents of the container is unloaded and at a second, lower speed during a second phase during which the remainder of the contents of the container is unloaded.

29. (amended) Apparatus as claimed in claim 1, wherein the moving means includes means for delivering the container to the unloading position at which articles are unloaded through an open end of the container, and further comprising means for conveying unloaded articles away from the unloading position along a path, wherein the conveying means extends substantially across the open end of the container at the unloading position except at the path.


REMARKS

By the above amendment, the claims have been amended so as to correct the dependency thereof.

Examination of the application and favorable action thereof is respectfully requested.

Please charge any shortage in the fees due in connection with the filing of this paper, to Deposit Account No. 01-2135 (912.39939X00) and please credit any excess fees to such deposit account.

Respectfully submitted,



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VERSION WITH MARKINGS TO SHOW CHANGES MADE

Please amend claims 4-6, 8-11, 16, 17, 23 and 25-29 as follows:

4. (amended) Apparatus as claimed in [any preceding] claim 1, wherein the receiving and unloading positions are substantially at the same level.

5. (amended) Apparatus as claimed in [any preceding] claim 1, wherein the rotating means is effective to rotate the carrier so that a container is rotated between said first and second orientations.

6. (amended) Apparatus as claimed in [any preceding] claim 1, wherein the translating means and rotating means are each reversible.

8. (amended) Apparatus as claimed in [any preceding] claim 1, wherein the carrier comprises a carriage slidable between said receiving and unloading positions and a rotatable carrier mounted on the carriage.

9. (amended) Apparatus as claimed in [any preceding] claim 1, wherein the position at which the translating means locates the carrier at the unloading position is determined by reference to a dimension of the container or its contents.

10. (amended) Apparatus as claimed in [any preceding]

claim 1, wherein [said] the translating means and rotating means are arranged such that initial movement of [a] the container away from the receiving position includes both translational and rotational components.

11. (amended) Apparatus as claimed in [any preceding] claim 1, wherein at least one of [said] the translating means and [said] the rotating means includes means for moving the carrier to a preferred position following a stoppage.

16. (amended) Apparatus as [claims] claimed in [any of claims 13-15] claim 13 or claim 14, including means for controlling articles in [said] the path such that articles already unloaded in [said] the path may be maintained at a level which is substantially the same as that of [said] the conveying means.

17. (amended) Apparatus as claimed in [any of claims 13-16] claim 13 or claim 14, wherein the conveying means comprises endless band conveyor means.

23. (amended) Apparatus as claimed in [any of claims 19-22] claim 19 or claim 20, wherein said first speed is variable and said second speed is fixed.

25. (amended) Apparatus as claimed in [any of claims 19-24] claim 19 or claim 20, including further detector means for stopping the conveying means substantially when the

contents of [a] the container have been unloaded.

27. (amended) Apparatus as claimed in [any of claims 19-26] claim 19 or claim 20, including a variable capacity reservoir for receiving articles from [said] the conveying means, including at least one sensor for detecting the relative capacity of the reservoir, and further including means for controlling the conveying means in accordance with signals derived from the sensor.

28. (amended) Apparatus as claimed in [any of claims 13-18, incorporating apparatus as claimed in any of claims 19-27] claim 13, wherein the conveying means is driven at a first relatively high speed during a first phase during which a first, major part of the contents of the container is unloaded and at a second, lower speed during a second phase during which the remainder of the contents of the container is unloaded.

29. (amended) Apparatus as claimed in [any of claims 1-12, incorporating apparatus as claimed in any of claims 13-28] claim 1, wherein the moving means includes means for delivering the container to the unloading position at which articles are unloaded through an open end of the container, and further comprising means for conveying unloaded articles away from the unloading position along a path, wherein the conveying means extends substantially across the open end of the container at the unloading position except at the path.